

L.V.A.U.G. NEWS

MEMBER OF NEAR US

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER-1995 ISSUE #5

North East Atari Regional

User Support Group

An alliance of Atari User Groups predominately from the Northeast area of the United States. NEARUS was organized to provide a network of communications between people who would not ordinarily get together but have common problems and concerns. A BBS network is set up, and a common newsletter issued periodically is planned. This gives us a broad base of die hard Atari users sharing their problems,concerns, and knowledge.

User groups in Canada and as far away as Germany have shown an interest in NEARUS.

The following list of BBS's support NEARUS, with more joining in the near future.

ABUG Reading area 610-779-7859
ACUTE Lehigh Valley,PA 610-261-0620
Bit Byters Germany-LIAUG 516-234 4943
Help Key Allentown area 610-868-4856
JACG New Jersey 201-298-0161
LIAUG Long Island NY 516-234 4943
NEAT Northwest PA 215-335-4805
Ol'Hackers NewYork 516-234-4943
RACE New York 516-221-8462
SAGE Erie PA 814-833-4073
SJACE New Jersey 609-931-3014
STARR Connecticut 203-421-4861

Editors' note: We made every effort to include all known suporting BBS's, if any were left out, it was not done intentionally. Any additions or corrections are most welcome and will be so recorded in the following newsletter.



LVAUG ADVERTIZING RATES



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Eighth Page	$5	$10
Classified		
3 lines	Free	$3
5 Lines	Free	$4

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Regular " -$10.00
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ATARI 800XL

CHIPS ON THE BRAIN

Technology playing catch-up to futuristic fiction.

By Alan Goldstein
Staff Writer of the Dallas Morning News.

Johnny has a computer chip wired to his brain, and it's giving him a mind-bending headache.

The film "Johnny Mnemonic" starring Keanu Reeves is about a 21st century information smuggler who over-loads the chip in his head. When it begins to leak, he has to get it out--or die.

Sure, it's a movie. But one of the points of science fiction is to walk a blurred line between the possible and the improbable. Consider how outrageous Jules Verne's prophetic writings about travel to the moon seemed a century ago. For that matter, the hand-held communicators from "Star Trek" aren't too far off from today's cellular phones.

Far-fetched as a chip in the brain may seem, computer chips already are being used inside the human body. For instance, chip-controlled pacemakers regulate heart rhythms. Researchers are working on using chips to connect nerve endings to artificial limbs.

With advances in computer and medical technology moving at warp speed in recent years, one might wonder about this idea of implanting chips in our heads.

They could give us the instant number-crunching capabilities of a supercomputer or augment our ever-more-crowded memories, overflowing with PIN numbers and computer passwords.

Christof Koch, a professor of computation and neuro-science at the California INstitute of Technology, beleives it may be possible in 40 to 60 years.

"Wouldn't it be neat to have a chip like that?" said Dr. Koch, who has been studyng how computer technology and neuroscience can be blended to develop an artifical brain. Scientists are using computers to study the ways brain cells interact with each other to, for instance, recognize a human face.

"Clearly, it's about the most important thing we ever could possibly do,"said Marvin Minsky, a professor at the Massachusetts Instituteof Technology, who co-wrote a science fiction novel. "The Turing Opton", which dealt with artificial intelligence in the human brain.

In addition to giving people superherolike brains, chips could serve as prosthetic devices, helping people with visual or hearing impairments. Conceiveably, they could someday help people traumatized by a head injury or suffering from dementia.

But before the semiconductor industry--already expected to be a $200 billion business within a few years--gears up for new demand from chip implantations, there are some major hurdles to be overcome.

The biggest is that scientists don't yet understand the codes and languages in which the brain's neurons communicate with one another. Neurons are the structural and functional units of the body's nervous system.





Munro Cullum associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, said that with neurons, some communications are electrical, while others are chemical, and some are a combination of the two.

"We really can't replicate that artifically at this time," said Dr Cullum.

Moreover, the body tends to reject foreign substance. The immune system certainly would fight a computer chip, said Dr. Koch.

But researchers noted that break-throughs with implanting artifical objects into the human body can rapidly become commonplace.

"In a way, pacemakers started this," said Guenter Gross a professorof neuroscience at the University of North Texas. He said pacemakers can have computer chips tht are controlled from outside the body.

Already, Dr. Koch said, electrodes implanted in the upper arm can help operate an artificial mechanical hand, although the finger movements are crude. That's because the muscles on the upper arm aren't meant for the control, he said.

Of course, there are fundamentally different ways in which computers and humans process information.

Much of the advantage real neurons have over computer chips in making complex computations can be attributed to their interconnectedness, according to the Society for Neuroscience in Washington DC.

A typical neuron receives information from more than 10,000 other neurons at a time, which it then processes and transmits to an equal number of cells. By coparison a transistor in a computer generally is connected to only three or four transistors.

So although the tens of billions of transistors in a modern supercomputer may approach the number of nerve cells in a human brain neurons still have the edge because they are much more complex than transistors.

"The way we store data is very different from how a computer chip does," sid Dr. Koch.

Humans have what is known as associative memory. "I give you the first name, you remember the face, and the name pops into your mind," said Dr. Koch. "A computer is not associative. I put in something, store it as XYZ, and I find it under XYZ. The brain doesn't do that."

Those difference are part of what makes adding massive computing and data storage capabilities to our brains particularly compelling.

"The brain probably never calculates anything," says Dr. Gross. "It just doesn't operate that way. It's a pattern-matcher. The brain is not a very effective calculator. Computers work faster and store more information.

JOHNNY MNEMONUIC, based on a short story by William Gibson, doesn't offer much detail on how that implanted chip is supposed to work. Incidentally, the film made an anemic $12.2 million after its second weekend and is fading fast at the box office.

Mr. Gibson, who is perhaps better known for his popular science

POWER WITHOUT THE PRICE!

ATARI #1

fiction novel NEUROMANCER, couldn't be reached to elaborate on his ideas about chip implantations.

For all the promise, spokesman for semiconductor makers Intel Corp. and Texas INstruments Inc., which are expected to spend $800 million on research this year, said their scientists aren't developing applications as futuristic as wiring computer chips to human brains.

They remain more focused on more familiar applications for chips, like computers and telecommunications equipment.

Neil McGlone, a spokesman for TI in Dallas, said there are considerable legal and ethical issues to consider, as with any kind of science that attempts to artifically alter the balance of human development.

"Scientists at TI are aware of that type of neurological research," he said, "We beleive it's a long way off before we can see anything like (a chip in the brain), if ever."

William Lytton, associate professor of neurology at the University of Wisconsin, said that a pocket size device that can provide all the computing power anyone would need maybe available in the next decade, long before the problems of chip implantation could be solved.

And, he noted there is an advantage to being able to put computing power in your back pocket,instead of having to undergo brain surgery. "If I could talk to my wallet, all the rest of this would be rendered obsolete," he said.

FEW SCHOOLS HAVE ACCESS TO INTERNET

WASHINGTON (AP) For nearly two-thirds of the nation's public schools, the worldwide computer Internet is more of an inter-not.

The Department of Education released a survey yesterday showing that about 35 percent of schools have some access to the Internet, either in classrooms, labs, or media centers.

But nationally, only about 3 percent of classrooms have access the report said.
"Only a small fraction of our classrooms have access to new technologies that are becoming so central to the rest of our lives." commented Education Secretary Richard W. Riley.

The Internet connects computers around the world and allows individuals to obtain information and documents from distant sources and to ask questions of experts in various fields. (Morning Call 2/4/95.)



Language on-line

Definitions of terms used to talk about on-line systems:

**On-line:* Connecting one computer to another via modem.*

**Modem:* A device that links computers via telephone lines; two common modem speeds: 2400 and 9600 baud.*

**Baud rate:* The speed at which information is transferred.*

**News wires:* Daily news reports, syndicated columns available on computer databases.*

**E-mail:* Messages sent electronically between computers.*

**Bulletin board:* An area with messages for special interests, such as health or cooking.*

**Special interest group:* A complex bulletin board containing computer programs graphic files and other information about a specific topic.*

**Chat board:* A service that lets users "talk" live to each other.*

**On-line symbols:* Some users use colons, semicolons and parenthesis to form sideways facial expressions called smilies:*
:)= a smile ;(= a wink
:(= a frown :O= a yell

**Shareware:* Software, including games and graphics, that can be copied from an on-line service legally.*

**Custom forum:* The ability to create an area where other users can enter and exchange information on specific topics.*

**Iquest:* A service that conducts specialized research on complex topics for a fee.*

**Downloading:* Moving software, graphics, photographs, sounds and so forth from one computer to another.*



September 7, 1995
Meeting Notes

Meeting called to order and opened in due form by President Art Paolini Jr.

Treasurer Rich Kohn reported that we have 1200 dollars in the treasury at this time.

Discussion was held on trying to get people involved in the club by trying to get "Jaguar" people and their games to attend the meetings. More in the future on this subject.

Club disk of the month is "Puzzlamania" and several puzzles on disk were demoed by Art for the members present. Very interesting club disk.

The President is to be complimented on the snazzy new disk label that he has made up for the club disks. Thanks a lot Art!

Art also demoed a very good "German" demo disk which was very interesting and certainly did a lot of things and was very fascinating to watch.

Atari Navy went thru the "foulrift" on the Delaware river and another craft went on the Delaware about 8 miles below Trenton recently, the rocks have become even more dangerous as the water level keeps receding in the river due to the lack of rain.

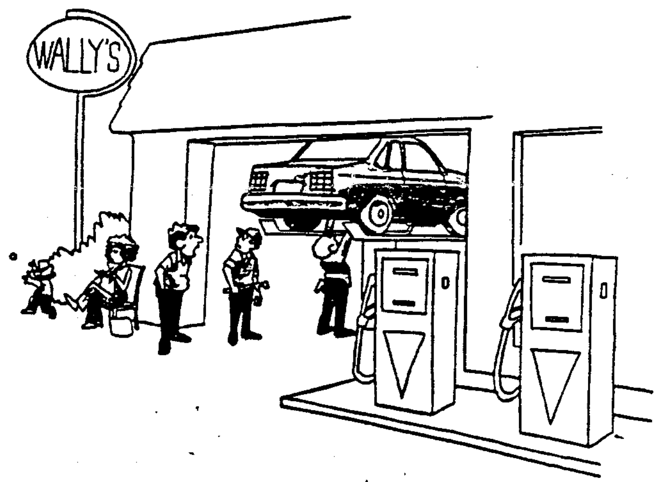
Next "Nearus" meeting is schedule for the second Saturday in October over on Long Island at the meeting place of the Ol'Hackers.

That is all the meeting notes for tonight's meeting folks.

Larry Tischbein
Secretary

The following was found in the April/May issue of Aelein Transmissions, the Newsletter of the Atari Exchange of Louisville, in Kentucky:

"If you find mistakes in this publication, please consider that they are there for a purpose. We publish something for everyone, and some people are always looking for mistakes."



"Do you sell any postcards here? I want my friends to see where we spent our vacation."

Atari-ST RoundTable
Category 39, Topic 2 Message 123
Sat Aug 12, 1995
AEO.MAG (NCC-74656) at 03.23EDT

A message from Mr Ted Hoff,
President Atari North America

A couple weeks back, I sent out a public response to the on-line concerns and confusion I was hearing about "Fight For Life". I want you to know that I appreciate the megabytes of feedback everyone sent back through the channels. You helped reassure me that I was hearing you properly from the beginning and the decision to reexamine the "Fight For Life" project was a good one.

Now that I have been with Atari for a short while, I find myself very glad I came on board with my sleeves already rolled up. The people I counseled with told me that consumers were concerned about very specific aspects of Atari development and support. I was told Atari Jaguar users were happy, but they were also hungry and I realized that one of my highest priorities was to set the table. I have taken a hard look under the hood and I can tell you I agree. The Atari engine needs a tune-up. on the other hand I found a lot of high-quality polished steel and have a heck of a lot going for us. Of course all the improvements we need to make will not all happen overnight. I know you've heard this before, but we continue to need a bit more of your valued patience.

I hope everyone realizes I cannot share everything I am working on, but I do feel obligated to stay in touch with our most faithful users. Please allow me to share some of the things I am working on.

Not too long ago, Atari hosted a media day at Atari which turned out being a fun and very worthwhile event. It was an opportunity to speack directly to the gaming industry's most promiment media personalities, grant them unusual interviews, offer them previews and answer their questions. I am sure you have read about the event in one of the on-line publications already. Based on that success and addressing my eagerness to entice more publications to cover the Jaguar, Ron Beltramo and our PR agency are helping me to arrange a big media presentation next month.

The decision to provide the Team Tap peripheral with "White Men Can't Jump" seems to be very popular. I will be looking hard at similar ways to give our loyal gamers great stuff like that in the future. Please check this title out. Don Thomas just sent a CATnips with an accumulation of kudos collected from all the major on-line services. Look for the latest on-line publications for reprints of that lengthy file.

We have just updated our snail mail list again and we have very definite plans to use it soon so watch your mailbox. I hcw heard from retailers telling me their customers are walking in to stores with the postcards in their hands so I know they seem to be working. I think you'll see that entire campaign become more frequent and improve as we intergrate the mechanism into our routine.

We are taking a hard look at exploiting the growth of the Internet to provide more timely news, unpredecented levels of support and access to our company. I think we hve a really cool company and I want people to experience that with us.

You should all realize that right



now is a very critical 4th quarter planning time. There's the CD-ROM and a lot of software tumbling out of the factories fast. To do it right, we are discussing specific strategies with key retailers to accomodate their marketing plans. Some brand new local and national retailers are coming on board.... names you've been telling us need to carry the Jaguar. Don Thomas has been persistent with a request to let him know as soon as we can make announcements. I've promised him I will keep him informed.

By the way, the Jaguar CD-ROM is still scheduled to begin shipping on August 24th. I know there were once a lot of debates about VidGrid(which just so hpppens to be a lot of fun), but "Blue Lightning" and the "Tempest 2000" Soundtrack will also be tossed in the mix. On top of that I've seen to it that a playable Demo of "Myst" is included. The "Myst" demo will help highlight visual aspects of the complete CD-ROM/Jaguar 64 system that are nothing less than astounding. The software which adds up to over $100 value is all part of the CD-ROM package.

I am going to make an effort to regularly issue a statement like this to keep people up-to-date. I'm sure you understand I can not answer everone's questions individually, but I don't want to be moving forward without knowing how you feel. Make sure your forum/roundtable/topic SysOps collect your questions and forward them to Don Thomas (75300.1267@compsuserve.com) If he cannot answer the question right away, I'll see what I can do to answer it for eveyone.

Finally, it is most important to once again say "thanks". I want you to know that your word-of-mouth support of the Atari product line is valued very much.

--Ted Hoff
President, North American Operations
Atari Corporation

Your Editor's note: This article is reproduced from the August 1995, "The Sage Scroll" of Erie PA.

KATHY'S ASPIRIN CAKE RECIPE

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Remove toys from countertop. Measure two cups of flour. Get baking powder. Remove kids hands from flour. Get baking powder. Remove kids hands from flour. Put flour, baking powder and salt into sifter. Vacuum mixture the kids spilled on the floor. Get an egg; answer the phone. Separate egg and warm babys bottle. Help daughter figure math problem. Grease pan; answer the doorbell. Take 1/2 inch salt from greased pan. look for kids. Put mess in the waste basket, dishes into the dishwasher and call the bakery.

TAKE TWO ASPIRINS

(Reprinted from June 1995 issue of PACESETTER)



WHERE TO FIND GOOD HOMES FOR THOSE ORPHAN MACHINES

Wondering what to do with that old computer that's been taking up valuable closet space?

Don't throw it away-- a Carnegie-Mellon University study estimates that if people keep tossing them at the current rate,by the year 2005 used computers will require landfill space equivalent to an acre of land dug 3 1/2 miles deep. Here are other options:

Sell it on-line. *Many Usenet news groups on the Internet are devoted to various kinds of computers, such as AppleIIs(comp.sys.apple2) and Atari (comp.sys.atari.8bit). Some, including the Commodore forum, comp.sys.cbm, allow participants to post notices offering equipment for sale. "Normally on newsgroups you're not supposed to post ads, but we encourage it, to get (Commodores) to people who really want to use them intead of having people throw them away," says Jim Brain, who maintains the group's frequently asked questions file. It includes lists of vendors and user groups.*

Check with used goods dealers. *In addition to furniture and household appliances, some such as Urban Ore. (510-559-4450), a Berkley, Calif. company, are starting to sell old and "orphan" computers.*

Give it to a non-profit *organization, community free-net or local school. The Computer Recyling Center (415-428-3706) in Mountain View, Calif. uses old computers to teach computer repairs and distributes them in the schools and through its "Computers for Guns" exchange program in the San Francisco area. Tony Ozodu Associates (617-287-0628) of Dorchester Mass., sends used computers (with software only) to schools in Nigeria. Educational Assistance Ltd. (708-690-0010) of Glen Ellyn, Ill. gives used computers to colleges in exchange for scholarships for underprivileged students. Materials for the Arts (404-853-3261) gives them to cultural groups and artists in and around Atlanta.*

Upgrade it and keep it yourself. *Add-ons such as hard drives and better printers may make an old computer powerful enough to suit your needs for less than the price of buying something new. Even if you do buy a new computer, it may make sense to keep the old machine, especially if games or other software you like aren't available for newer machines. If you need help using or fixing your old machine, the Internet is your best bet; try searching for on-line resources on World Wide Web indexes such as Yahoo(http://www,yahoo.com) using the brand name of your computer as the search word.*

Talk is cheap---mostly because the supply is greater than the demand.

Service is love in action.

Those who say it can't be done should get out of the way of those who are doing it.

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LEHIGH VALLEY ATARI USERS GROUP
Meets the first Thursday of every month at 7:30 P.M. at the:
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